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 FM SECSTATE WASHDC
 TO USINT HAVANA IMMEDIATE 6171
 BT

~~UNCLAS STATE 079627~~

E.O. 12065: N/A

TAGS: MMOL, UR, CU

SUBJECT: NY TIMES ARTICLE MENTIONS CUBAN SUBMARINE BASE
CONSTRUCTION

1. (U) ARTICLE IN MARCH 29 NY TIMES, ENTITLED "SOVIET SHIPS
 ARRIVE AT CAM RANH BAY," INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS:

QUOTE:

IN A RELATED DEVELOPMENT, INTELLIGENCE AIDES SAID THAT THE
 SOVIET UNION HAS STARTED BUILDING A SUBMARINE BASE IN CUBA,
 APPARENTLY FOR USE BY THE CUBAN NAVY. THEY SAID THAT CON-
 STRUCTION, WHICH ANALYSTS HAVE IDENTIFIED AS A SUBMARINE
 PEN, HAD BEEN SIGHTED AT CIENFUEGOS, A PORT ON CIENFUEGOS
 BAY ABOUT 140 MILES SOUTHEAST OF HAVANA.

EARLIER THIS MONTH, OFFICIALS REPORTED THAT MOSCOW HAD
 AGREED TO GIVE HAVANA AN F-CLASS, CONVENTIONALLY-POWERED
 SUBMARINE. THEY NOW BELIEVE THAT IT COULD BE THE FIRST OF
 SEVERAL VESSELS TO GO TO CUBA IN COMING MONTHS.
 UNQUOTE.

3. DEPARTMENT HAS PREPARED THE FOLLOWING PRESS GUIDANCE ON
 THIS SUBJECT:

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Q. WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT REPORTS THAT THE SOVIETS ARE BUILDING A SUBMARINE BASE, PERHAPS FOR NUCLEAR SUBMARINES, AT CIENFUEGOS IN CUBA?

A. IT IS EVIDENT THAT SOME CONSTRUCTION IS GOING ON IN CIENFUEGOS BAY. IT HAS ALSO BEEN KNOWN FOR SOME TIME THAT THE USSR RECENTLY TURNED OVER ONE OF ITS OLDER SUBMARINES TO CUBA. THE 2,000 TON FOXTROT-CLASS SUBMARINE WHICH CUBA RECEIVED IS DIESEL-POWERED, NOT NUCLEAR-POWERED, AND IT IS INCAPABLE OF LAUNCHING MISSILES.

THE CONSTRUCTION AT CIENFUEGOS APPEARS TO BE RELATED TO CUBA'S EFFORT TO BUILD UP ITS NAVY. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THUS FAR OF PLANS FOR CUBA TO RECEIVE NUCLEAR SUBMARINES OR FOR THE STATIONING OF SOVIET NUCLEAR SUBMARINES IN CUBA, BUT WE SHALL CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE SITUATION CLOSELY.

CHRISTOPHER

END OF MESSAGE

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